

Core Knowledge® Foundation Recommendations for Elementary Math and Reading Programs

Disclaimer: The Core Knowledge Foundation does not explicitly endorse or claim to evaluate the efficacy of the many elementary reading and math programs available from commercial publishers. We have, however, reviewed the programs listed below and recommend them for consideration by Core Knowledge schools. We encourage schools to carefully review each program to determine its fit with state and any district level standards. Schools are also encouraged to periodically consult the online *What Works Clearinghouse* (www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc) to stay abreast of current research.

Elementary Math Programs

Title	Grade Levels	Publisher	Notes
<i>Saxon Elementary School Math</i>	K-5	Saxon Math/Harcourt Achieve; 800-284-7019; http://saxonpublishers.harcourtachieve.com	Grade level student kits for K-3 range in cost from; grades 4 & 5 have a separate teacher edition and student edition.
<i>Singapore Mathematics</i>	K-12	Distributed in the USA by Marshall Cavendish Education; 503-557-8100 or school@singaporemath.com http://www.singaporemath.com	Comprehensive mathematics curriculum originally developed and used in Singapore; this is the math curriculum used by Singapore students who surpassed many of their international peers on the TIMMS. There are teacher editions and student workbooks for each grade level.

Elementary Reading Programs

The Core Knowledge Foundation is in the process of developing and field testing its own program, the *Core Knowledge Language Arts* program (CKLA).

The program is based on the premise that there are two keys to reading comprehension: (1) decoding and (2) the language and content knowledge needed to understand what is decoded. Decoding skills are taught during a one-hour Skills Strand that provides explicit instruction in synthetic phonics. Reading and writing are taught in tandem during the Skills Strand as inverse processes. Starting in grade 1, systematic grammar and writing instruction is also included in the Skills Strand. Skills Strand components include teacher’s manuals, some decodable Big Books, student workbooks and decodable readers, chaining boards and letter cards, as well as other manipulative materials; media disks of the Big Books and decodable readers are also included.

The one-hour Listening and Learning Strand focuses on building oral language and content knowledge through carefully sequenced oral read-alouds grouped into thematically unified domains, selected from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Fiction and nonfiction read-alouds build listening comprehension, vocabulary and specific knowledge of each domain. Listening and Learning Strand components include teacher’s manuals, illustrated Flip Books, selected trade books, small image cards and posters, and student workbooks.

Over 100 pilot classrooms are presently using the CKLA program, with promising early results.

The Core Knowledge Foundation strongly recommends that, in selecting a reading program, schools take care to select a program with an explicit, systematic approach to teaching phonics and word attack skills in the early grades. Programs lacking such an explicit approach are likely to be ineffective. Reading requires not only decoding skills (best taught by phonics) but also broad background knowledge and vocabulary (best taught through a rich curriculum like Core Knowledge and frequent reading aloud). An ideal reading program will include good phonics instruction (followed by fluency work) combined with frequent reading aloud to expose children to new words and key subjects like the subjects listed in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Moreover, the reading aloud will include not only fictional stories but also generous amounts of nonfiction. We also caution schools to avoid programs that devote substantive periods of time to teaching students to use metacognitive “reading comprehension strategies.” The use of such strategies as the principal focus for building overall reading comprehension has not been shown to be effective. As noted earlier, schools are encouraged to periodically consult the online *What Works Clearinghouse* (www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc) to stay abreast of current research.

Title	Grade Levels	Publisher	Notes
<i>Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar</i>	K-2	Jolly Learning; 800-488-2665; www.jollylearning.co.uk/	Variety of component materials that teach basic decoding skills using a synthetic phonics approach, with emphasis on sounds first (rather than letter names); workbooks and decodable readers are available. <i>Jolly Grammar</i> is designed to be used to reinforce spelling and grammar after students have been introduced to one year of <i>Jolly Phonics</i> . Used widely in the United Kingdom
<i>Open Court Reading</i>	K-6	SRA/McGraw-Hill; 888-772-4543; https://www.sraonline.com/products.html?PHPSESSID=80d6914c992157ebd43ca4a07409a472&tid=16&sid=342	Comprehensive basal reading program with explicit phonics instruction in the early grades; includes separate decodable readers in K-3 to ensure repeated practice in applying phonics skills. Part 1 of each unit, Preparing to Read, focuses on phonemic awareness, sounds and letters, phonics, fluency, and word knowledge. Reading and Responding makes up Part 2, which emphasizes reading for understanding. Part 3, Language Arts, focuses on communication skills such as: spelling, vocabulary; writing process strategies; writer's craft; and English language conventions such as: grammar, speaking, and mechanics; listening, speaking, and viewing; penmanship; and basic computer skills. See web site for pricing of multiple components
<i>Read Well</i>	K-2	Sopris West; 800-547-6747; www.soprislearning.com	Comprehensive early reading program with explicit, systematic phonics instruction; includes whole group and small group instruction for differentiation of instruction; includes decodable readers, as well as other instructional components addressing read alouds, handwriting, spelling, grammar and written expression.

<p><i>Reading Mastery Signature Edition (2008)</i></p>	<p>K-5</p>	<p>SRA/McGraw-Hill; 888-772-4543; https://www.sraonline.com/products.html?PHPSESSID=80d6914c992157ebd43ca4a07409a472&tid=9&sid=3307</p>	<p>Comprehensive basal reading program, using Direct Instruction; explicit phonics instruction in the early grades. Three strands address Reading, Language Arts, and Literature.</p> <p>The Reading Strand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses all five essential components of reading as identified by Reading First—phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. • Provides spelling instruction to help students make the connection between decoding and spelling patterns. • Develops decoding, word recognition, and comprehension skills that transfer to other subject areas. <p>The Language Arts Strand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaches the oral language skills necessary to understand what is said, written, and read in the classroom. • Helps students communicate ideas and information effectively. • Develops the ability to use writing strategies and processes successfully. <p>The Literature Strand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the reading strand by offering a wide variety of literary forms and text structures. • Provides multiple opportunities for students to practice vocabulary and comprehension strategies and write for authentic purposes. • Gives ample opportunity for students to read at their independent level. <p>See web site for pricing of multiple components.</p>
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